This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

1. Poetry, American.

NB 1

Reed

UNDER-CURRENTS

UNDER-CURRENTS

BY

MARGERY VERNER REED

NEW YORK

AUTHORS & PUBLISHERS CORPORATION

4th Avenue & 30th Street

MCMXXI

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
9827324
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
1938 L

Copyright, 1921, by the
AUTHORS & PUBLISHERS CORPORATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Out of the Depths	9
My Love	30
Under Cover of War	31
In 1915	36
Dear Little Gipsy	38
Unfulfilled	44
Strange Flower of Life	46
One Night	63
Have Ye Forgotten the Deathless?	71
A Moment of the Future	78
In the Wake of War	83
"Unhappy—Far-off Things"	90
Nothing Less Than This	95
The Eternal Father	108

WQR 19FEB'36

UNDER-CURRENTS

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

PART I.

Blue shadows on the sparkling snow—
Ilka—warmly dressed in furs came across the park—
With high spirits—and dancing eyes—
A faint wind disturbed the bare branches of the trees.
The blue shadows moved a little on the brilliant white—
Ilka watched them—
Somehow—
out of hidden knowledge—an odd strain reached her ears—
there was some buried power within—that she must release—
must know—
She was in a mood for wild music—for extraordinary sounds—
something to loosen the bonds of this incessant knocking at the bars of thought

You are my grandchild—
Ilka—
Yes—Ilka Ravenall she repeated more faintly—
But no one knows—

A gipsy Grandmother would disgrace.
These strange longings—impulses—sudden moods—
are mine—
and you feel them from me—
I came from the desert—I passed to you—my grandchild—a gipsy spirit—
some genius perhaps—
now go—
go into the world—with your knowledge of yourself—
and beware—
strange things will happen to you—strange thoughts will come—and deeds—
whenever you are tense—almost wild—
remember you are part gipsy—
and listen to music—intently—each note will calm—
And will help you on your way—

But the music did not calm—
It was strange—
at each chord—some barrier broke within her—a wave rushed over her—
at last—all separation between conscious—and subconscious—had fallen—
it was all one—
one horrible—unknown and incomprehensible thing—
She understood nothing—
On and on went the Rhapsody—

now tense—now milder—and her very soul cried out in its misery—
She saw—but could not remember later—
The conscious self was awake—and pushing back—those things—which should have remained unknown—
The music stopped—
Weak—
scarcely able to control her steps she went out again into the snow—
she looked at the blue shadows—they took on a different meaning—
It was—but it had gone again and she could not recall—
Blue shadows—
oh—now she knew—
she pressed her hands to her head—the pain—she leaned against a tree—
Souls have color—
Souls have tones—
If consciousness could only sleep—while she delved to find her color—her tone—that never—as long as she walked on this earth—
could she meet or know an unharmonious soul—
one that would disturb her serenity—and leave traces of off color—discords—
An orange haze passed before her eyes—
When she came to herself she was sitting in the snow with her back against a tree—

She gazed through the blue haze of evening—
Blue—she murmured—
Blue on the white world—

Shall I ever see again the forgotten color—or hear the lost tone—
Afraid to hear again the Rhapsody—afraid of the mental pain—if the barrier should break—give away once more—yet wanting to know—
But—she thought—I could not remember—
She struck tones on the piano—
none vibrated—
responded—
none answered the ardent cry of Ilka Ravenall.

PART II.

Each evening—when the sun has set—a man stands in the fields—peering into the mist—as if to know what lies beyond—
The blue—gray mist that rises and seems to enclose the world—
He is waiting—
When night comes—he returns to his house—to a cheerless fire—and wonders—
He thinks a great deal about his soul—this lonely man—
He tries to find some explanation of why life is—why should he always be alone—when he craves company—
There are men in the fields—below him—but with them he cannot speak.
They think and speak on different planes.
They know of the earth—which soil will bear the richest fruit.
and he—
dreams—
in a far-off world of Philosophers and Saints.
One night—
there was a storm blowing in the trees—a strange terrorizing thought came to him—
If he should walk down the fields with the lightning

of Heaven to guide his steps—
and kill
a farmer—in cold blooded murder—Would his soul be damned for all eternity—
He shuddered—as the thought passed away.
Getting up and lighting the lamp he cried out—
Why should this thought come to me—
I am not a man who would kill—
O Lord—he cried—
I am told that thoughts can be punished as well as deeds—
Like one deprived of reason he fled into the fields—watched the lightning as it flashed against the dark sky—listened to the thunder as it crashed in the forest
beyond.
To what end am I here—to what end—
He knelt in the wet grass and prayed that his soul might be taken—
A great fear had overcome him—
the fear that he would kill—

There were hundreds of people—
They passed—
and passed again—
See—how He walks—
The burden is too heavy—
Why does He carry His own Cross—

It is symbolical—
all the children of Earth must carry theirs—
in all the ages—
why are the children of earth?
It was his own voice that rang in the air—
Surprised he half turned—to see why he had spoken.
But only the crowd pushing—
It is Calvary he thought—
How came I here—
I must go back—
The thunder still roared in the night—and the rain fell on him—
Some vision has come to me but my question remains unanswered—
Why am I—why is the thunder and the lightning—
Why are the men in the valley unable to understand my thoughts—
Are they happy—
or—am I—

PART III.

There was a soft light in the drawing-room—
the curtains were drawn against the winter cold—
There lacked a feeling of harmony—
She knew she was thinking thoughts no one would understand—
Conscious of off-color souls—
Only our own—or complementary colors blend into consciousness—until we forget they are near.
The man of the irritating color sat opposite Ilka in a comfortable arm chair—
Then—you will not?
She nervously clutched her sleeve—she nearly screamed—
How dare you—your color—and mine—could never harmonize—your note—a discord—
Listen—
She was intent—
There in the corner—a note—
I hear it—
You are crazy Ilka—
no—my mind is far away from yours—
you are not able to understand—
When alone she went to the corner—by the window.
Yes—
very faintly—some vibration—above her—near the ceiling—
She sat at the piano—but could not imitate—

PART IV.

One evening—alone as usual—he thought again of his soul—
He had pondered and thought so much—that at last he was half way satisfied with the
vague idea of unknown things he had worked out for himself—
Innocent souls are created in Heaven—but there—the happiness is so great they have no understanding—
just as I when summer is here do not understand the warmth—
Winter blasts teach me appreciation.
Therefore these Souls must pass into Earth—to be born—
to have a realization of their immense happiness by having known sorrow—
A three fold development of which this is the second—the most terrible part—
But again—I ask—why do some souls suffer for a lifetime—others—pass on at the day of birth—
Still thinking—
trying to understand—he left his retreat in the woods and fields—for a sojourn in the great city.

There was a pianist scheduled to play that evening. The last number on the programme was the 12th

Hungarian Rhapsody—
Shall I stay—or go—
thought Ilka—
will it again break down those walls in my soul—
make me suffer—
She spoke little to her companion—
His soul is a stagnant pond surrounded by weeds—
yes—
you spoke of the stock market—
I believe—
intensely interesting—
a stagnant pond she repeated to herself—
On the other side—a quiet man—
His face bore traces of suffering.
He looked about him—as if unused to bright lights—
Several times during the evening—their eyes met.
They seemed drawn—but neither spoke.
Finally the Rhapsody began—
Ilka started to put on her cloak—and stopped—as if a hand of ice had been placed on
her shoulder—
Another second—and the unknown shadows of a strange reality were
creeping over her—
If I put out my hand—
Are notes tangible—
It is the note—the one by the window—a silver chime—gray and silver—

It seemed to vibrate from his soul—
Suddenly she reached out her hand—touched the stranger's arm—
gray and silver—she whispered—
you wonder about the Soul—
Gray and silver are your colors—
and your note is—

What possessed you to speak to a stranger—asked her companion as they went from the hall—
he must be a foreigner—
he did not seem to understand a word you spoke—
She had forgotten—
She only knew that the music had again produced its terrible effect.
And she concluded never to hear the Rhapsody again—

Grey and silver—my soul—
Perhaps we bring with us the color by which we were distinguished in the first stage of our advancement—
What a strange young woman—
I should like to know what color she calls her Soul—
His wish was granted—
this man who thought of his Soul—
this girl who saw colors and heard notes—
They met—

In the blue haze of the evening—skating on a vast expanse of frozen lake—
An old friend introduced them—
not knowing their souls had met before—

PART V.

The moon was shining quietly over the old garden—
Roses were in bloom—
on a stone bench—two lovers sat—
What difference does it make murmured Ilka—
we believe in God—
we love—
whether my soul is purple or blue—my note *g* or *a*—
we love—
Yes—whispered Ferdinand—
God did not think best to let us know all—let us put away these mysteries which we cannot solve—
Our love is eternal—our Souls and hearts were created for each other—
let us leave our destinies to the will of Our Creator—
For a time—by their love—their minds were at rest—
They seemed to have forgotten the things
which troubled—which in former days they had pondered over.

PART VI.

Deep rich tones filled the Church—
The sun streamed through the stained windows—
a ray caught for an instant in the tulle veil, lighting up the bride's hair—
For ever and ever—was their promise to each other—
For ever and for ever—echoed in the music—as it resounded in the eaves and
arches—above the heads of all the people—
Flowers—
lighted candles—
Ferdinand and Ilka knelt—
With them it will be different—
Their love will never die—
They will help each other—
here—and for ever after—
the souls that met on earth—will go hand in hand—
all through Eternity—
Deep rich tones—
It was no human joy which filled them—on their wedding Day—
Ilka—for ever to protect and love—
And you Ferdinand—that you may find me worthy—

PART VII.

They travelled away—across the seas.
One still night—in Venice—
they floated on the Grand Canal—
reclined on cushions in their Gondola and listened to distant singing—

Italian music is so entrancing—

But soon they floated under the open windows of a palace—
some one was playing the Rhapsody—
Dismayed—he caught her hand to help in the mental struggle she had told him of—
Oh—now—I know—
I see it—
Through great pain—she spoke—
A gipsy's soul is different—
mine is of two colors—
Ferdinand—you must help me—she cried—when she came to herself—
only you—beloved—can help me—
I have understood now—
with that tense—terrible feeling—my soul takes on the hue of my Grandmother—
Yours is grey and Silver—
neutral colors—and can blend with both of mine—

PART VIII.

They left behind the blue waters—the palaces and Churches—and journeyed to Florence—and from there to Sienna.

Ilka leaned from the window—looked out on the soft hills—on the evening sky—

Her thoughts were gentle.

That day they had visited the Church and house of St. Catherine—

Perhaps—she too had known terror—

as she gazed ahead at the coming years—

Had her mind been troubled—by vague ideas—turbulent waters—that each soul must know—

Below her—a long procession passed—

Ferdinand—

look what is it—

The men were masked—they carried a coffin—draped in red—

An Atheist's funeral—

oh—Ferdinand—

how horrible—

She hid her face on his shoulder—

A man—who had put God out of his life—and now—called—to face his Judge.

Will he know torture—or—will his soul return—

There is not a second life here—Ilka—The souls that pass do not return—

I do not understand life—
Neither do I—
none of us does—
Life is an experience the soul must know—must have—to comprehend—later—when we have returned to God—the immensity—It is beyond us all.
He closed the window—
and gently led Ilka away—
The cortege had left a profound impression on her sensitive soul. In the Cathedral—she prayed as she never had before—not for understanding—of things she must not know—but for a greater Faith—She thanked—that to her had come—this wonderful love—this man—who understood and sheltered—A soul—made strange by human inheritance—by the strains which lingered somewhere in the depths—
She would never cease to wonder
why—a Soul could inherit—how could a gipsy—born long before her—pass on to a soul yet unborn—
The lights—half darkened that she had felt.
Ferdinand—by her side—thought of a night—
long ago—when he had wondered if he should kill—
He thanked God—that he had not—and that instead—this woman—Ilka—was to walk at his side
For ever and for ever—
The choir—as if of Heaven—seemed to respond to their moods.
It touched strings

unfelt to both before.
It rose—and grew softer
Beloved—whispered Ilka—
Her eyes had filled with tears—
We know this superhuman happiness—this Peace which comes from Prayer
let us pray—for the soul of the misguided man whose coffin passed under our window. Perhaps no one has prayed before—
Peace came into their own Souls—
They prayed each day for the unknown Atheist—
They were quieted—and a greater Faith—came to them—Faith above reason—
God will guide us.

He looked into Ilka's eyes—
Suddenly the field once more—
Night—
The black thought of murder once more—
He shrank before it—
The music burst into his heart—
The dark thought faded—faded—
And went out
Forever!

PART IX.

The years passed happily by—
Their Faith and love for each other increased—
One evening—it was in January—and a storm outside made the house full of cheer.
The Russian pianist played—
The light fell on his white hands—as they passed over the keys—
The Moonlight Sonata—
They seemed to be again in Italy—the moon—shining on the cypress—the splash of water on their Gondola—floating on the canals—the Churches—the villas and palaces—The Peace that had come to them—and had remained
ever since—
Suddenly—
the first chords of the dreaded Rhapsody—
Ferdinand's face turned pale—
He watched Ilka—and wondered if the old torture—the pain—had again returned to her gentle Soul—
A crash on the piano—
the music of gipsies—
softly—
faintly—
then louder again—

the gipsies were sitting in the grass—
blue smoke curled over their heads—
These people—understood by none the world over—
A longing—strains of something unknown—
He suffered for her—
Her face was calm—she seemed listening—intently—
The gipsies were passing—roaming outwards—in quest of they knew not what themselves.
A roving band of people—seeking—never finding—
It was a cry—
The birds in their passage flew over their heads—
seeking the sun of warmer regions—
A child cried faintly—
a flower on the roadside was out of its reach—
A man called to his horse—they passed almost from sight down the long white road—
Ferdinand—
as the music ended—
and the pianist passed on to something else—
Ferdinand—she cried as she rushed into his arms—
I have conquered—conquered my gipsy self—
I heard each note distinctly—
and nothing—broke loose within me—
In another room—they sat for a long time—with their arms clasped in loving embrace—and watched the flickering of the fire—
heard—

as a vague accompaniment to their love—
notes—played by the Russian—
When his mood passed away—
and he turned from the piano—
he was surprised to find himself alone—

MY LOVE

The moon will shine again through the square leaded panes—
Fantastic shadows will be cast on the table which is in front of the window—
But you will not be there to see.
You will see the moon—
not shining in a narrow court yard and into the room where so many happy hours were spent—
but out in the open—
it will shine on barbed wire—
on weary men—
on wounded—and on dying—
Will you—as you lie in your trench and gaze at the Heavens—
think of the moonlight night when you took me in your arms—
when you whispered a last farewell—
and the moon—pitiless at my grief shines through the square leaded panes—
only
I am alone.
Far away
there is the sickening sound of a horn—
A vessel sailing away—
Is it yours—beloved—are you already on the waves—

How beautiful the moon must look as it shines on the water—
How sad is my heart for you have gone away—
This day will come again each year—
and each year as I gaze into the night—
I shall remember—
I shall remember.

UNDER COVER OF WAR

They say they are terrible men—
I see them—
they advance—
The Austrians—
Sonia—we are lost—
The two sisters stood at a window of the old country estate—in the Government of S.
And in the valley—advancing—in the gathering dusk—a long row of soldiers—
The Austrian enemy.
We are lost—
But Nathalie—
They are Russians—our own men—
no—Sonia—
not our own men—
the enemy I say—
They are coming here
to capture—to take us—

And you know—little sister—the fate of women—
in the hands of the enemy.
Still the soldiers advanced—
and Sonia—
a slender girl of eighteen stood and watched in the gathering dusk.
It would be better to die than to be taken—Sonia—
No no not yet—
we are too young—
—Nathalie—what are you doing—
But Nathalie slammed the window.
Not that death—she said coldly—
there is some poison—there—in the casket—
Luka left it when he went away—
for such an emergency—
Look—Sonia—they come through the gates—
Quick—
But Lvoff—
He will be killed—if he has not already been—
Swallow I say—
And you—
Yes—there are two—
see I will take mine first—
What courage Nathalie
breathed Sonia—
With a prayer for her soul—
—for Lvoff—who fought somewhere—in the clutch of war—

And making the sign of the cross—
she swallowed the poison—
at her sister's command.

Sonia—Sonia—
His men—in the anteroom shuddered as they heard his cry—of deepest anguish—of unbearable grief—
Dead—my Sonia—
and your Lvoff—
come for a leave of absence—
to wed you—
Sonia—awake—see my grief—
Her fair body—turned black from poison—was put beneath the ground—by the soldiers who had come—
Not the enemy—but Russians—with Lvoff in command—
And now—Lvoff—you are mine—
cried Nathalie triumphantly—
Yours—what do you mean—
Sonia has gone—you must take me for your bride—
You—but I—
Oh Sonia—my own Sonia—
He called his men to go back—in hopes that he would meet death half way—
Life—deprived of Sonia—was barren—unreal—
Death and Lvoff did not meet—
The war was over—
Lvoff—prematurely grey—with face drawn—by pain

—by the horrors—too terrible for description—through which he passed—lives alone—retired—
The incessant knocking at the door mingled with his dreams—finally aroused—he went to see—
You do not know me—I have changed—from suffering—from hunger—I am Nathalie Antonovitch—
He drew back—
Nathalie—
The quiet grave under the trees—the white body—turned black—deep eyes—closed for ever—
Lvoff—
I feel that I shall not live—if I keep longer—the terrible secret to myself—You must know—listen—
Be calm Nathalie—
what dreadful thing—
Your letter came—I knew the writing—I opened it—An overpowering jealousy—I could not stand the thought of my little sister
wedding first—I killed—
Yes—Lvoff—with my own hands—
I made her believe the advancing soldiers—
—Austrians—
to take us in bondage—
I had two powders—one harmless—
I wish to God
that I had taken the poison.

Sonia died—only a few moments before you came—

Your name was the last she spoke—and I—her sister—
her guardian—
killed—
He seemed not to understand—
He gazed absently at Nathalie—
Outside the wind gave a low moan—
Sonia—
Snow must be on your grave—
And someone tells me—
killed—
and not dead—
What is the difference—
I do not know—
Then—truth dawned—
Jealousy—he shouted—
Jealousy—
He rushed at Nathalie—
as if to choke her with his hands—
then drew back—
God is merciful—
go—go for ever—
Oh—Sonia—
my Sonia

IN 1915

Water splashed in the distance
Midnight
Moon rays shone through
Made white streaks on the walls
Close the shutters—the moonlight will betray us—
A face at the window there in the dark
Here is the ladder—quick—there is not a moment to spare—
Close the trap door.
The sound of marching—it had been dim—now it was loud—

Any women here—
No
Farmer Gornichev
Yes.
Three daughters—a wife—
The farmer stared—
Efficiency—
They have gone—
gone—they can not be far—
and the night is well lighted—
The moon
Some men went down the road

the officer stayed—
Any vodka
No.
A mouse ran down the wall.
The farmer thought of his wife—his daughters— in the garret
If the soldiers should find the ladder.
It was securely hidden—
was any thing safe in war time—

Night passed
There was no food left. The farmer had served all to the uninvited guest.
The officer looked at his watch—
A pleasant day—farmer Gornichev —
A sigh of relief—soon the officer would be out of sight—
He could liberate the four from the garret—
He watched at the window—
The officer turned back—
I thought there might be a cool breeze tonight—
Your wife and daughters might be cold. He set fire to the dry vines and shrubbery—saw that the flames encircled the house—
The roof and garret caved in—
Once—it had been the home of happy Russian peasants.

DEAR LITTLE GIPSY

The storm had broken in splendor—
Great crashes of thunder—
lightning—
The trees of the forest swayed—
The cries of the animals—
of birds—
Down—between the branches of great oaks—torrents of rain—
The gipsies fled into their tents—pitched in the darkest part of the forest—
Veronica was with them—
She was not of gipsy blood—
an orphan—
They had stolen her—years before at a fair—in the village—
She remembered vaguely some former life but had no desire to return—
The forest—
The free life—
She loved them—felt no fear for the dark eyed men and women she had
learned to call her own—
From an opening in the tent she watched the storm. It rose to the heights of its fury, and died away as suddenly as it had come.

What had brought the memory of the storm so vividly today—
The memory of a life—gone—forever—
of free—happy days—
It had passed long ago—
The gipsies—
their band dispersed—by the soldiers—
had wandered away—some alone—some in groups.
And she had come back
to her own people.
They disclaimed her—
the little Veronica—they called her dead—
She—
they called her impostress—
The forest—the happy life—
She longed—but knew the former life would never come again—

The cabaret was crowded—
with men and women—drinking and smoking—
playing parts—off the stage—
in the great drama of life—
She passed between the tables—
singing—
in her gipsy costume—
The songs that long ago—
She and Pietro—had often been applauded at village

fairs for their voices—
Then—the same words had meant happiness—
now—the world seemed cold— cruel—
A man—seated at one of the tables—held out his hand as she passed—
in a drunken voice murmured—
Dear little gipsy—
You too—Pietro—have found this life—this sham—
She seized the glass from his hands—
tramped on the broken pieces—
I will show you what I think of that—

Pietro—it was horrible to see you—drinking with those painted women—
Have you forgotten the old life—
Our love in the forest—
You promised to protect—to keep me from all harm—
and when the soldiers came—
oh why did you leave me—
I thought—when you did not come—that they had killed you—
Veronica—as you see me—what am I—
You are a man—the only man I have ever loved—

The room—
become filled—with a bright green light—
The man who stood before her—

his long hair fell in tangled gray masses over his green robes—
The eyes gleamed with fire—
A harsh laugh broke from his swollen lips—
green flames—all about him—
Now—dear little gipsy—where has your ideal gone—
surely—it has broken—
shattered—
like the pieces of my wine glass—
He caught her in his strong arms—
her very soul was burned—
The green robes were of fire—
I am a friend of Satan—
I am not Pietro—of the gipsy band—
If I told you my name—
your body would wither—and become ashes—
your soul would stand before me—
Pietro is dead—
I only took on his appearance this evening—
Your soul is white—it is the kind I want—
What have I done—
Whoever you are—let me go—let me go—
Her piercing cries awoke the old music master who lived in the flat above—
Hurry—James—
his wife was pale—
Some one is being hurt—

He rushed onto the landing—
the staircase was thronged with people—inhabitants of the house—
The cries come from below—from Jark Carter's flat—
They broke in the door—
The room was full of cigarette smoke—
heavy with the fumes of alcohol—
Several men looked up and into their laughing faces crept something of fear—
They had not expected the other people in the house to interfere—
A young woman—
lying—prostrate over the table—
Her slight body was shaken by sobs—
exhausted—from screaming—
She moaned—
let me go—
She struggled—with some unseen assailant—
What have you done to that girl—
The music master called his wife—
they lifted her from the table—
She is suffering—
She looked—
but seemed not to notice the men and women—
groped her way—
and sank heavily on the floor—
Wake her up—old man—

we have had enough of this—
the next thing we know the police will be walking in—
A young man spoke—and jovially slapped "the professor" on the back
What does it all mean—
The music master spoke in a commanding voice—
Oh—nothing—that is nothing much—
the Professor—as we call Jack Carter—
bet us a hundred dollars he could mesmerize Veronica—
she is his cousin—
she is here studying singing—
We bet him he could not do it—
I don't know why she screamed so—
no one touched her—
That is all—
That is all—ejaculated the old man—James Warden—
he gently stroked her pale face—
You may have ruined her mentality—
she has been through mental torture—
From her screams I know she suffered—
and you—
laugh—
Veronica lay on the couch in Mrs. Warden's little sitting room—
Her strength was gradually returning—
You have been so kind to me—

how can I ever thank you—
The woman stroked her hair—
Do you feel better dear—
Yes—I am beginning to feel like myself again—
It is strange—
I must have dreamed—
I have been so weak ever since—
it must have been horrible—
Dear little gipsy—she murmured as she closed her eyes—
Where have I heard it—
Mrs. Warden—Veronica asked suddenly—
may I call you Dear little gipsy
The name comes to me over and over—
It seems to fit you—
You have such beautiful eyes—

UNFULFILLED

He sat at the piano and would play
a sonata perhaps—
his fingers wandered over the keys but struck discordant notes—
—you will sing of the lotus—
in the pool
under the great blue sky—
a discord.
He tried another sonata

it went no better—
sing—
sing to me of the bubbling fountain
sing of the sunlight and shadows that lie on the marble floor—
and weave the moon of the desert night into your music—
It is shining on me now—making a strange light as it falls on my hair—
on my silver veil—

He played far into the night—
weird strains of the Orient—
of the Lotus and the song birds —
and the memory of the dark eyes.
It was the orient—
he was there once more—
Was this his masterpiece—
surely it must be—
now the world would know
he had the gift.
The perfume of strange flowers arose about him—
the piano—
the room became filled—
A fascination of mysterious far off things—
She—that he had left behind—
to him but a passing fancy—
known on one of his many journeys into the out-of-

the-way places of the world had used some magnetic spell—
had discovered the young composer at his piano—
thousands of miles away—

His music became strangely flat—
meaningless—
his compositions betrayed a dying soul—
and the masterpiece—
colored by the lotus—
with the charm of Eastern lands—
If he ever returned—
would it once more be his—
but until then—
it slept—
The world was not to hear the enchanted tones—

STRANGE FLOWER OF LIFE

The streets were full of dust—
throngs of people—
pushed—
laughed—
screamed—
The murmur of a hundred voices surged above his head—
only once in a while some familiar word lingered in his ears.

They were all hurrying to the arena on this Sunday afternoon—
He thought of other Sundays peaceful—quiet days—
in the south of England, of walks in shady meadows—
For three months John Hutchison had been stationed in Gibraltar—
and this was the first time he had set foot on Spanish soil—
anxious to know something of the country he had crossed the bay—
to Algeciras—
Disgusted with the crowds of boisterous people—
with the prospects of a bull fight—
of blood in the Arena—
He would turn back—
but pushed on by the crowds he found himself at the entrance—
The Arena of Algeciras is not a large one.
Within there was no great display of the far famed Spanish beauties—in mantilla and high comb—
Again he turned back—
oh—for the peace of an English Sunday—in the meadows of Devonshire—
here—noise—music—dust—
A hugh bouquet of jonquils arrested him—
Flores—señor—
It was a sweet voice—
her dark eyes flashed as she glanced at his uniform—

Englese—
she whispered to her companion—
He took no notice—
this companion—
Roderigo Lopaz—
out for his weekly holiday with his young fiancee at his side—
the envy of his friends—
the prettiest flower girl in all the South of Spain—
they called her—
The meadows in Devonshire, the peace of other Sundays—
they had vanished—
he saw only those dark flashing eyes.
Roderigo seemed to have forgotten—
he screamed with the others—
he became hoarse from shouting—bravo—bravo—
She spoke no English—
his Spanish was broken—
but he managed to tell her she was beautiful—
He asked her name—
Lolita—
and she lived?
here in Algeciras—
a flower girl—and Roderigo—
where was he,
the man over there—

she pointed to the heated figure—waving his hat—shouting
John understood—he was her brother—
will you come to see me to morrow—
no—
he had only one free day—Sunday—when he could leave Gibraltar—
Well—then I will see you—
I often go to Gibraltar to buy flowers—
A month ago—even an hour ago—
John's heart and soul would have revolted—
A young woman coming to see him—
flowers—
on the grim rock—
there were few—only some in the park—
and Algeciras was overflowing—
But this evening—
the sun was setting in a burst of color behind the arena—
Lolita smiled at him—
He forgot the world—
his straight English training—
he looked into her eyes—
Until to morrow—
she waved at him as she walked away with Roderigo—
He did not hear—he did not see the stranger—

he was still waving his hat—
calling to his friends
the victory of the day.

For the first time Gibraltar looked beautiful—
the narrow winding streets—
with shops of all nations on either side—
they might have been the most spacious boulevards in the world—
Here too—throngs of people—
English soldiers
walking with their wives—in the gay lighted streets—
The ocean rolled black in the harbor—
then a ship sailed out—
lighted from bow to stern—
—like an enchanted vessel he thought—
on the way back to his barracks he stopped—
and looked over the gaudy display of an East Indian's shop.
The owner stood in the doorway—
his dark eyes gleamed—
some wicked thought—
he looked on John's honest face—
The bronzed skin wrinkled about the mouth—
as he showed white teeth—

Two months have passed—
May and June—

his letters to England were few—
far between—
before—they had been one long steady stream
deploring his loneliness in foreign parts—
Now—Gibraltar was beautiful—
full of flowers—of sunshine—
He seemed not to notice the oppressive heat—
he loved the continual stream of people—
of all nations—
Arabs—
Jews—
Orientals—
He had learned a great deal of Spanish—
the most beautiful language on earth—he thought—
the most expressive—
The wares of the East Indian still fascinated him
often—
on oppressive nights he would walk down toward
the harbor—
and look at them—but he did not buy.
The thick lips in the bronzed face—
parted—
and the teeth gleamed white—
Had John seen—
or felt—
The rays of wicked thought did not pierce—
Lolita—
her laugh—her eyes—

his very soul was filled by them—
He lived in one long dream—
It is the second of July—
The great rock lay in the fiery heat. Across the bay—
There were trees there and the whole, town of Algeciras seemed sleeping—the afternoon siesta—
the wooden blinds were lowered over the windows and several awnings were stretched over the patio—
a cart with a broken wheel lay in the entrance—
Lolita arranged her flowers in a basket—
She made a picture—
under the awning—in her bright dress—
but Roderigo did not see—
his heart consumed by anger—his face distorted—
Roderigo rushed at her—
Unfaithful he cried—
Unfaithful—I—Oh—Roderigo—
You tell me—for two months—each afternoon—you go to the hotel—to sell flowers to the strangers—
He caught his breath sharply—
then his voice grew louder—
a blind was lifted and the sleepy head of an old man appeared—
Well—
it was a lie—
a shameless lie—
I go to the hotel—day after day—to see you—

you are never there—
I look all over—
Inside—in the corridors—
in the patio—
no Lolita—
then one day I go over to Gibraltar—
on business for the patrone—
In a narrow alley—
I see a red skirt with blue flowers—
a brilliant shawl—
just as I start to run—to see if it is you—
a man—
tall—
brown—
dressed in foreign clothes—
comes up to me—
She is not true—
Who what—
I am startled—
He points after you—
Lolita—
She comes each day—
an English soldier—
stationed here—
Roderigo Lopaz chokes over his words—
he cannot control the anger—
there is a knife in his belt—

swifter than a gazelle—she has run by him—
he follows—
crushing the fallen flowers—
the basket—as he goes—
but the broken wheel of the cart—
he falls over it with a curse—
In the doorway—
The thick lips parted over the white teeth—
the East Indian laughed—

What is the matter—
you are pale—
Oh John—the most terrible thing has happened—
she sobbed out—
Roderigo he has discovered—some one has told him—
Does not your brother approve that some day we will marry—
My brother—
I have none—
he is my fiance—my father arranged—
Lolita—
There was no life in his voice—
the cry echoed in her ears—
What—John—you did not know—
I do not love him—
It was my father—
Lolita—how could you—

I told you—the first day I saw you—in the Arena—
Told me—
The beauty of Gibraltar has faded—
the flowers—the sun—all seemed to have been swept into the sea—
It rolled into the harbor—
black—
sinister—
the streets were narrow—
dirty—
there was no charm in the shops of many nations.
The white teeth gleamed in the night as the East Indian passed the solitary figure of John Hutchison
It was hot, unbearably hot—
there were all kinds of rumors—
An Austrian Archduke had been killed—
some days ago—
There might be war.
There were preparations in the barracks—
then things were quiet for a few days—
John cared for nothing—
not even the prospects of war could rouse the langour of his spirit—
Lolita—
he would cry out—
Lolita—
It was late one night towards the end of July—

there was a faint rap at his door—
An old man handed him a letter—
the writing was round—childish—
from Lolita—
she was ill—
the grandfather was peculiar—
he must not question him—
could John come—
she had not seen Roderigo since he had fallen over the cart wheel—
He sent an answer back by the old grandfather—
on Sunday—he would go—
His heart beat very fast—
he looked into the night—
below him was the sea—
Algeciras—on the other side of the Bay—
He thought he saw something white—
he leaned from the window—
It was gone.

Silence—
the streets were filled with motionless silent people—
War—
It had come—
England had not gone in yet—
she still hung—breathless—on the verge of the precipice—
but her soldiers could not leave the Rock—

War seemed so impossible—then—
no one could comprehend its meaning—
it was only a heavy indescribable fear—
oppressing the people.
All the nations of the Earth were represented on the Rock—
they had lived there in comparative peace—
and now—
must all be called to fight—
English—
German—
Hindustani—
Arabs—
Africans—
fight—kill—
Was it to avenge the Archduke's death—
no—that did not seem a plausible reason—
Why then—
The rulers of nations wished it—
there is no real freedom—
we—the subjects of Nations—
must follow—and remain silent—or face imprisonment—
We are not told why—
We are told to obey.
On the fifth of August England joined in the conflict—

Orders at first were refused—
were the soldiers in Gibraltar to stay—or go—
John—
pale—
walked in the crowded street—
watched—
he could not go over to Algeciras—
would he ever see her again—
John—John—
she fell—almost fainting in his arms—
I have looked everywhere—
what is all this—
war—and they say you too—have joined—
Yes—
And you—
I do not know yet—I shall probably have to go—
And I—
Oh—Lolita—my beloved—
he caught her to his heart and looked into her eyes—
Lolita—
There was war—
he knew—
a strange—half-excited feeling throbbed somewhere—
but the lights of the streets had come back—
there was charm once more in the display of many colored goods—

of silken draperies—
Lolita walked at his side—
The open shop of the East Indian
seemed brighter than usual—
silks were thrown over the counter—
inside were ornaments of the East—
Bracelets of jade and onyx
brought from Ceylon—from Colombo—
John—how pretty—
Yes—Lolita—how pretty one would look on your arm—
come—I will buy you one.
They came inside—and the door closed on the brightly lighted street—
With a scream she clung to John—
Roderigo—how came you here—
Unfaithful, he muttered—
there was a knife in his belt—
the door was locked
the two men struggled—
It looked as if Roderigo should fall—
he lost his grip on the strong Englishman
The knife fell to the floor—
a dark silk curtain was drawn back—
white teeth between parted lips—
gleamed—
John was dead—

He did not fall on a field of glory but went to a bottomless grave in the sea—
with a slacker's name
for he had disappeared from his regiment—

There was blood on the silken draperies from India—
on the rugs from Persia—

The world
black—
unbearable
now that John had gone—
Lolita swore revenge—

There was war in many countries but not in Spain—
there—

the young men did not have to march away—
young girls did not have to cease planning their lives—

Lolita and Roderigo made peace—
she smoothed with words his wounded pride—

It would—later on—be balm to her heart—to torture him—
the easiest way to achieve her aim—she thought—
would be to marry him—
then—she would see—

In September—
the grandfather—from an open window watched—
but did not understand—

The friends danced and sang—and drank to the bride and groom—
to Lolita and Roderigo—
Her heart was black—with hatred—for the two men who had killed John—
the only ray of happiness that had ever come into her shallow life—
First the Oriental—she thought—then Roderigo—
She danced with the East Indian—
the dance grew wilder and wilder—the music grew louder—
she drew from her loose sleeve—
what she had need of—
she struck deep into his heart—
but he did not fall—
his bronzed face remained close to hers—
and she saw his teeth—
with a horrible scream she fled into the house—
up the old stairs—
to the window where the old grandfather sat—
lifting her hands above her head—
she seemed to call the protection of a God she had too long forgotten—
For an instant—she thought of her childhood
when her mother had taken her to Church—
then the Mother had died
Flower girls too often drift away—
John—

The old man leaned from the window—
he did not understand—
the still mangled body on the stones of the patio
was the little granddaughter—
a suicide—
her grave was the bottomless ocean—
On the top of a steep cliff—overlooking the sea—
as the sun sank in a far off purple mist—
the East Indian stood—
in a long robe—
The waves dashed against the cliff—
To the battlefields of France—he called
and again the white teeth gleamed—
and the sinister eyes shone—
There is no death for spirits of the Evil One

ONE NIGHT

Perpetually—
An accompaniment to her daily life—
In minor chords—
deep in the fathomless depths of her soul—
So low—
Sometimes she could scarce hear the cry—
Always the same—
it came across the snow-covered steppes, across the steppes when parched by the sun—
Marie—

A soul gripping call—

A—Boje moi—

as if all the suffering of the world was bounded by these two words—

For an instant her dream would be dismissed—while she soothed some soldier—

For years the beds had been filled with wounded—with dying—

and Marie Igorovna—with five other sisters—had nursed—had helped them—

sometimes ill themselves, but with courage— with hope for the morrow—had kept bravely on—

One night—perhaps a year ago—perhaps longer—the days were all alike in the hospital of M. save for the changing season.

A man had been brought in—

He will not see the dawn—

The words were familiar—

She stooped down—gently drew the stretcher blanket back from his face—

It seemed as if the sun were trying to outdo itself in splendor—

It shone down on the old wall, on the brilliant red leaves, turning that late autumn day into a Paradise of color—

Marie Igorovna was sitting on top of the convent

gazing out into the world—
into that splendid autumn day—
Her auburn hair harmonized strangely with the leaves, like a symphony—
Vladimir Petrovitch was not a man to notice the beauty of nature—
an autumn day meant nothing to him—
He was cold and matter of fact—
In his way he cared for Marie Igorovna—
To her it was nothing more than a passing interest—
In the long winter evening when the students would be gathered in the great hall, listening to some drawn-out and tedious lecture, it was assuming to think of the meetings—she on the wall—he below in the dusty road—what pleasant chance that his regiment was stationed in O.—
That day he had decided to force Marie into an elopement—
A sentimental courtship was not to his liking—
In the distance—the bell was loudly calling the girls to study after recreation hour—
If you go back to the convent—you will never see me again—
I refuse to stand here another day—and talk to you there above my head—
Suddenly some wild impulse—with no thought for the future—

only the intense—living present—

In the conservatory dance music filled the air—it floated out to them from the ball room—
My husband will not find us here—he thinks I am in there dancing—
After three years of married life—devoid of romance, living first in one garrison town, then in another, bored by her provincial entourage—
Marie Igorovna had suddenly found herself passionately in love with a young lieutenant of the guards—
He was a year younger than she—handsome—and without moral sense—
Danger is attractive to women like Marie—
She had grown to fear Vladimir—half asleep for years then suddenly awakened by some irresistible force—
A love too powerful to cope with—
In the distance—the dance music floated lightly in the air—
The Troika glided over the snow—
the driver called sharply to his horses—
then—all was still—
He kissed her auburn hair—
her mouth—
She drew herself up with a startled cry—
A soldier looked at her in vague astonishment—he called out for water—

later—when some of the men slept—some had died—
she stole back—
to see if Serge too—had died—
His black eyes were staring at the dim light, under the Ikon—
She stood motionless—
All the months they had spent together seemed suddenly to sweep by—she saw each moment—and at the end, the day he had gone away, tired—her beauty even for a moment had ceased to fascinate—
She was conscious that his eyes were now fixed on her—
Marie—is it you—
His voice was scarcely audible—
It was the most intense moment of her life—
the memory would remain for ever—
like a little child he begged for forgiveness—he plead for life that he might undo his wrongs—
Torn by love—by pity—Marie knelt at his side—
close by him a man called for water—she did not hear him—
she heard only the low weak voice whispering love eternal—
When I am well—
was it a prophecy—
He will not live to see the Dawn—
no—it was merely the usual phrase—He must live—

now that he had come back—
Marie—what does my father want—
But dear—your father is dead can't you remember—
Marie—his tone was of ice—
It froze her soul—
He clung to her—
but—before death human beings are powerless—
The first streaks of Dawn broke through the sky—
Sister Anna Pavlovna came into the ward—
Marie Igorovna she called out—some fresh wounded—
But a motionless unconscious, figure on the floor—
When they had revived Marie the other sisters thought for a while that her mind was wandering, so terrible was her grief—
A year had passed—
she worked—
amid the horrible suffering of the wounded men—
at last—
a Russian soul was learning to know itself—
to understand more fully the profundity of Russian nature—
Her own suffering had been so intense—she seemed to feel instinctively when others suffered—
Those bitter days—agonizing days of loneliness—of longing—
the dead were so far—
but one morning quite suddenly—the meaning of death seemed to come to her—

She had witnessed terrible sights, had even helped in performing ghastly operations—
That morning the sight was too much—
the air was heavy with anaesthetics, with the cries of the suffering—
it was only a veil invisible—
Serge was there—it was his spirit holding her up—
The dead then are not so far—
If we reach out our hands for help—why should we fear the invisible—
Her sorrow was lifted—she heard no more his cry as he had passed from life into death—
or was it from death into life—
Their love would be eternal—and he was simply waiting for her to cross—
only a thin invisible veil—
which separated them momentarily—
Marie Igorovna—
there is a man downstairs—he says he must see you—
as she went down the hall—his spirit was giving her strength—
for what—
she was not quite sure—
After a lapse of time we meet again—
Vladimir—
Yes Marie—it is I—
Why do you stand there staring at me—why don't

you speak—
I heard you were here, and have come far to tell you that I will forgive you—
that you may come back—
Perhaps it is the war—the state of affairs—that makes me—rather lenient—
To lose her real love for this—this cold—supercilious man—
as if the human ties of marriage counted against the eternal mating of souls—
How little you know me Vladimir—
How little you understand the woman—who was once your wife—
without another word, without a look she turned and went back to the ward—
Serge—she whispered—
my spirit guardian—
with inward strength she went about her work—
That night she thought of that other night—
When Serge died—
and it took on a new meaning—She had been close—to the Eternal Beings—and had not known it—

Her room was dark—only a small flame flickered under the Ikon—
She remembered—how Serge had looked at the one down stairs—

Suddenly without knowing why, she arose and blew out the light—
Yes I knew it would happen—the eyes can be seen—even in the dark—
The blue light—I had expected it—it is coming slowly—
there behind the Virgin—
She stretched out her hand—it looked blue—in that strange light—
everything in the room—
slowly—
oh—Serge I knew you would come—

The sun, strangely enough was shining that day—
It shone straight on to her hair—making an aureole of light—
a dark red mass on the pillow—
Vladimir Petrovitch stood at the foot of the bed, and gazed for the last time on that white, beautiful face—
I am a better man for having known her—he thought
All the love which he had kept down, in his cold heart, since a day so long ago—when he had met her—then only a school girl—
seemed loosened—
A flood of tears—
Vladimir Petrovitch had never wept—
He knelt, and passionately kissed the cold form of his bride—

I had no right—he cried out—she never sinned—it was I—
She was too young—too ardent a temperament—
I was cold—
He did not stay in M. for the funeral—
he wanted to keep forever—the memory of her calm face—and her brilliant auburn hair—
He returned to his regiment—
his soldiers wondered at the sudden softening of his ways—
He often gazed at the moon—at the magic rays shining on the snow—
A man who never before had perceived beauty in nature—

HAVE YE FORGOTTEN THE DEATHLESS?

There are some things in war that are beyond human comprehension—
so terrible—
so against all founded laws of social intercourse and life—
Things that at the time of happening rack the nerves—
then—
the memory eats into the heart—
the soul—
and one clutches into the black night—

and cries aloud
O Lord—is it I who have done this thing?
The memory only grows more vivid as the years pass—
It was war—done by order of a yet higher officer—
individual consciences were not reckoned with—

It had rained the night before and the ground was muddy—
The winter sky hung low over the bare trees—
The chateau, where the commander's staff was stationed looked dreary—some of the windows were broken—no one had thought of replacing them—
Pierre Laroux was on guard—
walking up and down—
slowly—
with a heavy gun on his shoulder—
up and down—before the chateau waiting—with trembling heart—the hour of his release from duty
In the small hospital quarters attached to the commander's staff—
Pierre Laroux kept bringing her to his memory—
he would see her in an hour—
she—who nursed—by day and night unflinching before duty
The beautiful Jeanne La Motte—
He loved her
He wanted her for his own

When the war is over—
not before—
why did she put him off—
An hour more—
he would urge her—
It began to rain again—
The last hour of duty seemed unending, unbearable—
They sat in a corner of the hospital room—by a great old fashioned fire place—
He adored her—
this golden haired woman—He wished for a moment that he could be an occupant of one of the iron cots—that she could ever be near—
And then—
the enchanted moment of his life—
Pierre—she had whispered—
you want to marry me—
I love you—too—
In three days the old curé in the village—will marry us—
Three days—
was it possible that such happiness existed—
The war even seemed to have vanished—
before his own dreams and hopes—
Three days—
he kept repeating to himself—
Oh Jeanne how happy we are going to be—

They talked again by the fireside—made plans—
there would be a little home—
when peace came—
The world would never have known such joy—
or have held so much love—

It was the eve of their wedding day—
they had planned to walk to the village—some four miles—and make the arrangements for the morrow—with
the curé—
Pierre slipped his arm around her waist as they started together down the road—
All life had faded into a ghastly nightmare—
terror—
horror—
seemed written in blood—
everywhere—
before his eyes—
The life that he had loved—had planned and waited for—
was swept into a chasm of blackness—
Jeanne—
his Jeanne—a spy—
no—no—there was some horrible mistake—
She was French—
he knew it—
Something would happen—

The Bon Dieu could not see his suffering—
and not send comfort—
release—
for the one held—as a spy—
it is a mistake—
His sobs choked him—
he felt he was going mad—
He saw the Curé coming up to the Chateau—
They had mercy enough to let her at least be prepared for death—
At that moment he hated—
but he could not—
he remembered—they were his own people—
He rushed after the priest—
I must see her, he cried—
we were to have been married—
to morrow—
The old man looked with kindly eyes—
but shook his head—
You too—would be shot as a spy if you saw her now—
I care for nothing—now
what have I to live for—without Jeanne—
Late that afternoon—Pierre Laroux was again on guard near the commander's door—
Half mad—
unable to think—
the tapestries on the walls were mocking him—

the voices of the other men were miles away—
he seemed to have forgotten everything—
save a terrible pain—
what was it—
where is Jeanne—
then again realization—
the last hours of her life—
if dawn could only never come again—
The Priest came up the stairs—
passed through the open door—
Pierre heard him say—
The prisoner is very calm—
she confesses nothing—
she says she will die without a murmur—
providing she can face the firing squadron—
in a costume of her own choosing—
Was she mad too—
what difference does it make how one is dressed at the hour of death—
In puzzling over it—
Pierre's burden seemed a little lifted—
It was not enough that she should die—
but he—Pierre Laroux—
who on this day—was to have been her husband—
should be one of the ten to stand facing her—with loaded weapon—
He knew that long before the sun had set—
he would be mad—

hopelessly insane—
In the courtyard paved in cobblestones—
still grey—in the dim light of early dawn—
waiting for the prisoner—
the spy—
to be brought out—
She stood before him—
in a long blue velvet wrap—
and refused the bandage for her eyes—
her golden hair hung loosely over her shoulders—
She held out her hands to Pierre—
it seemed that she would speak
Silence—the officer's voice was harsh—
One—
the death sentence had begun—
Pierre was rigid—he wondered if he were dead—
two—the harsh voice continued—
the blue cloak slipped to the ground—
Jeanne La Motte stood naked—
her beautiful body—
gracefully poised near the wall of the chateau—
The officer stopped counting—
he looked—
took a few steps toward her—
stopped—
c'est la guerre—he cried—
three—
nine guns fired—

Blood covered the white body—
Pierre—dazed—watched as they carried her away—
His name was on the casualty list—
but no one ever explained to his broken-hearted parents that he had been miles from the firing line—
He had been found dead—
where Jeanne had breathed her last—
O Lord—
I who have the croix de guerre—
have done this thing—
I gave the order—
one—two—
it is too horrible—
I wonder—was she really a spy—
it was never proved—

A MOMENT OF THE FUTURE

Broad fields of snow—shining in the night—
From the window the lights streamed out—in welcome to the guests—
It was a country estate in the Government of K.
Inside—
the rooms were bright, warm—
A log of fire burned cheerfully—
Boris Ivanoff and his wife, Anna—greeted their friends as they entered—

Only a few—informally—to await the coming of the New Year—
Lvoff Illitch and his wife—Anastasia—
Claire de Motteville—a young French widow—
Boris hardly spoke to her—her blond hair and cold blue eyes irritated him—
A young officer of the guards—in love with Claire—once he had threatened suicide—
Boris disliked him for it—
Constantin Astroff—a cold man of forty—a great friend of Boris—
He cared little for Anna—thought her beautiful—only vain and superficial—
A few minutes to twelve
Something of childish expectancy—
they watch the clock—as if wondering what the New Year holds in store—afraid—and anxious—
A servant brings vodka—
They draw nearer—
There is excitement—almost a tense feeling—
as they gaze into the flame—now blue—now yellow—
Now their glasses touch—
a minute more and the old Year will be only a memory—
In the distance—
across the snow—
the village bells give a glad welcome to the new-born year

Good luck—
Good luck to all of us—
The last peal of midnight—
The flame of the punch bowl flared across the room—making a curtain of fire—
With uncertain step Boris advanced. Beneath his touch the silver bowl seemed to melt away—
the flame leapt higher—
On the other side of the flame—dimly at first—then steadily—
shadows are moving—
is it twenty—thirty years ahead—
some of them egotistically recognize themselves—then shudderingly renounce the idea—
The officer of the guards is not there—
neither is Anastasia—
her husband is alone—
searching some road that will reunite their paths—
He will not believe this is all fate holds in store and turns away—
Anastasia smiles at him—she has not understood—
Constantin Astroff coldly watches Anna as she looks into the curtain of fire—
He wonders why no one has thought of extinguishing it—
With a look of horror—
with her eyes open wide—
then he too looks—

At first—he does not know Constantin Astroff
He follows him and is astonished at being able to understand the man's feelings—
now he is with him—they go to Anna's home and find her alone—
The older man has gone—he is Constantin Astroff—
he does not quite understand—
then begs her to go away with him—
There is some undercurrent of other knowledge—once —he disliked her—was her husband's friend—
Strange Egyptian music—
the wail of the desert—
the Sahara—
towards the setting sun—
A streak of red still remains—
the distant call of Dragomen
How strange—Constantin—
on that New Year's Eve long ago—we scarcely spoke—

•

The Church of the Madelaine in Paris is draped in black—
A silver cross shines on the dark background—
Beneath roses and violets, a beating heart has grown still—
Claire de Motteville—
She died three days ago—
Boris had not told her of his love—
a love that had been growing for years—

Her cold blue eyes had stopped him—she understood
and did not want to hear—
Boris is standing beside the coffin—
Soon they will lower her into the earth—
and he—
will be forever alone—
There are two dead—
his blood fell among the roses—
the violets—
his body lifeless lies across her coffin—

The sun was shining on the snow
In the village men and women embraced—
Good luck to us—
Good luck to Russia—
Church bells rang in the clear air—
children laughed—
The music stirred the depths of those Russian souls—
they were standing in the Church—
With cold eyes Claire de Motteville glanced at Boris
and shuddered—
then she forgot him
in the beauty
the mysticism of the Church—
After all—what difference does it make—
I dislike her now—
Anna looked at Constantin as if she divined his
thought

She drew nearer to Boris—
They loved each other now—

IN THE WAKE OF WAR

Again and again she appeared in his dreams—
had he really seen her—
or had it ever been a fantasy—
once—it seemed to him—
she had come—
and brought him some soothing potion—
at first—when he had been ill—month after month he had lain in that Turkish prison. Would the end ever come—
He wondered sometimes if he were still alive—or—had the whole world slipped into chaos—but even to that—an end was promised—
He thought of his own land—
as of something he had once known
In some distant past—
like a beautiful dream it haunted him—
the broad fields—
the sky—
the call of the birds in the wheat fields—
Did Russia really exist—
or had Turkey—the prison—been what he had always known

And the dream returned—
she appeared—
half shrouded in her Turkish veils—
He could never make out what she wanted of him—

The long room was lighted by candles—
An old monk talked to him—asked him about the prison—his escape from the enemy lands—
and told him of the many—of the great sorrows Russia had suffered in the last years—
You are quite safe here—stay as long as you will until you are well and strong—
That night—his first again on Russian soil—
The dream returned—
more poignant—
she stretched out her hands—
she plead—
Then for the first time he realized that she spoke Turkish—
He could not understand—
He walked over to the window and looked out on the calm night—
This dream must have some meaning—
It had come incessantly—
during the prison days in Turkey
Since first he had been taken—with fellow Russian soldiers by a Turkish company—
He slept—and dreamed—

She had always come to him alone—now another girl advanced with her—
He looked in horror—
the long black hair—
once—
the cheeks had been red—
life had shone from the eyes—
marks of cruel suffering—
She seemed no longer to understand—
Almost too weak to move he lay looking at the white-washed walls of the monastery—
Somewhere a bell was calling the monks to prayer—
as the first streaks of dawn came into the world—
It was only his nerves—broken by years of suffering—
There was no truth in what he had seen—
It was not possible that Tania too—had been taken—
She could have had no cause to be near the fighting-grounds of the Turks—
Was this the message the veiled woman had told in his dreams—
only in a language he could not understand—

The long white road stretched under the beating sun—
a soldier on horseback was riding as if death mattered little to him or to his horse—
In that village—in the south of Russia—
one would not have known there was war—so still—
some women knitted on their doorsteps—in the shade

of vines and trees—
Sanine rode into the village—
Is my sister here—
Old Baboushka X—sadly shook her head—
We thought you had been killed—
It were better—
the dead are spared sorrow—
your sister left years ago—to do war work—
Somehow she was taken by the Turks—

The monks talked to him—
In the white-washed room—
several of them had lost relations far away—on the northern battle-field—
when the enemy entered Russia—
one had lost a sister—
she had died a terrible death—
in Poland—during the invasion—
The dream is some prophecy—
If I had only known before my escape—
my sister—with vacant eyes—
I know the Turks—
their ways—
The monks watched him—
long after the iron gate was opened to let him pass—
until he walked down a steep incline and disappeared in the distance—
He had escaped from there—

he could surely find his way back—
to rescue the loved sister—
the friend who had protected her—

Resting under some trees during the heat of the day—
vaguely he could recall having really seen her—
in the early days—
when his head had pained incessantly—

With the aid of God—he would find them both—
bring them into safety—

Months had passed—
after terrible suffering he had found them—

Tania's mind was vacant—
She did not even wonder who the young soldier was—
She made no comment as they dragged through underbrush and mire—
at night—when there was no moon—

They spoke to her—and called her name—
She could not realize that they both spoke different tongues—
and could not converse together—
a look—a gesture—
which one day grew into love—

Little by little he taught Bacca Russian words—

It was early spring when he reached Russia again—
with Bacca and Tania—

Leaving them in the road below he walked up the steep incline

Could he have been mistaken—surely the monastery had been here—
A mass of charred stones—
The foreign enemy had not done this—
These at home will wreck still more my loved Russia—
Oh God—he prayed—is there any place in the world we three can take refuge—
They went to the village where he had always lived—
the greater part had been destroyed by fire —
his friends were dead—
Some twenty versts away—an old country estate—
deserted by the terrified landlord—
here they found shelter—some food had been left—
Bacca and Sanine loved—
Tania looked on with vacant eyes—
Sometimes they thought her better—other times the madness brought on by suffering—seemed worse—
Like landed proprietors they lived—among the dense trees of that wonderful estate—
entirely deserted—
save by three homeless wanderers—
Sanine a pilgrim is at the gate—he asks admittance—
Father—I looked for you—
the Monastery was burned—
it is now my turn to make you welcome—
here—in this place where we have taken refuge—

At the end of summer—
when autumns had changed the leaves to gold and red—
Bacca was christened—
She became a devoted Christian—
her soul had developed in sorrow, and then in love—
Bacca and Sanine walked together under the trees, among the fallen leaves—
The Monk watched them—that morning he had united these two souls in marriage—
With pity he looked at Tania—
She was breaking a wooden box with her hands—
She rose up—startled by the cry of a night bird—
The long knife she had found in the kitchen gleamed white in the candle light—
she clutched it—
Suddenly possessed by a ray of remembrance—
she ran down the stairs
My brother would have it so—
Three Turks yet remain—
In the hall—
She came across the bust of cupid—
With a harsh laugh she passed on—thinking she had met a guard of the Turkish prison—
Sanine and Bacca were sitting near the open fire—
two candles burned on the mantel—
They were making plans for the future—
for a time when there would be no war—

Tania will always have a home with us—
The long knife struck—
The monk—roused by Sanine's cries—
came—
They worked over her—what do you mean by trying to save a Turk—
They were the first words she had uttered in months
The knife struck again and again—
Sanine fell just as Bacca's soul slipped away—

The old monk buried them—
he wept as he spaded the graves—but a great thankfulness came over him—
they had died together—
in the most beautiful days of their lives—
before sorrow—or separation had come to them—
they loved each other—
and the world at present was no place for lovers—

"UNHAPPY—FAR-OFF THINGS"

The hill which leads to the Château of Blois was the scene of a splendid cavalcade of men in armor—
shining in the sun—
gay banners floating in the breeze—
It was in the days of Catherine de Medici—

Her three sons were still alive—
Blois, in all its splendor is to be opened that night—
its dark halls and great rooms will soon be gay
in candle light—
in music—
The rustle of silken garments—
Courtiers and ladies—
A ball will be given to honor the young queen—
Mary Stuart of Scotland—
On all sides preparations are being made—
The cavalcade of men in armor comes slowly up the hill—
Bearice is alone—
Her small room with its dark wood panelings—
narrow window—
and massive furniture—
Before a crucifix a prie-Dieu is placed——
She is waiting—
She moves anxiously about the room—now glancing down at the men—
now listening for a familiar step in the hall outside—
The steel glistens in the spring sunshine—
Bertrand—
Is he among them—
She knows of Catherine's hatred—of her jealousy—
A finer youth never belonged to the court—
to what heights might he not have reached—
If Catherine had not subtly hindered too well—his

advance—
The Mother's heart is sad as she thinks of her son—
of the love—
which unconsciously he won and returned—
Her hair had turned from grey to white as for months she had watched his pain—
On bended knees he had often prayed that their love might die—
That Mary of Scotland be shielded—
All around her in the palace the sound of hammering, of subdued laughter—girls and men hang tapestries in the halls—
arrange flowers—
Bearice—
The white haired woman turned and found herself face to face with the queen Mother—
You did not expect to see me—
no—I have been watching for Bertrand—
He is already here—below—
he wants to see you
She gazed at Catherine and vaguely wondered why she had come herself
It could only mean danger—
A strange terror crowded into her heart—
Mother—
Adored Mother—
be calm—
do not fill my last hours with fears—

We shall meet again—in another world
The Mother's heart was wrenched—she clung to Bertrand—
Her cries filled the underground passages—
other prisoners shuddered at the sound—
Like a mad woman she walked in the Chateau begging for the life of her son—
Mary of Scotland plead with her—
together the two women wept but the tears were of no avail—
The heart of Catherine remained unchanged—
In a dark cellar below the great Ball room in that old Chateau of Blois—
a soul waited for the event of death—
His last hours were peaceful—spent in prayer—
Above—the sound of music—
of dancing feet—
He is spared the sound—
as he prays from his heart—
The Queen Mother—coldly watches the dancers—
Her women-in-waiting feared madness as they dressed her in long black robes—
as they led her to Catherine—
Have mercy—let me leave this bright room to spend one more hour—with him—below—
Catherine's word was law—
Bearice stood at her side—more dead than living—
with parched lips and burning eyes—

Mary—beautiful in rose draperies—gazed at the Mother—
She seemed to feel the pain—the anguish of her heart—
torn—
bleeding—
A low moan—
then louder—
as of some terrific physical pain—
The courtiers and ladies stopped to listen—
to find whence the sound—
The cell of Bertrand below—
a hole had been bored in the floor and carefully concealed—
Bearice—with her head on the floor listening to each scream of torture. Her own cries are louder than his—
can no one stop—
has no one mercy—
Anguish overcoming—numbing all—
Bertrand—
the cry rose from her torn soul—
Mother—
it was his last spoken word on earth—
a call to the Mother whom he was leaving—a call to the great Mother who welcomed him in the world beyond—
Mary, fainting—had been carried away—
at last the cries stopped—

Sybil rose from the divan and lighted a cigarette—
It is pretty good—Marion—she said at last—
It takes me back to our visit in Blois last autumn—
I thought the action far too slow, put in Elizabeth—
the third of the trio of students who occupied a flat in the rue de L.

Marion made no answer—only gazed wistfully out into the rainy street—and thought of Blois—
with autumn colors—and bright sun—
Her eyes filled with tears—
The memory of Blois brought pain.

NOTHING LESS THAN THIS

The stage is hung with a rounded black curtain of dull material—
A sort of box arrangement draped in black
of three layers each layer smaller
like stairs at the middle of the stage.
At the front of the stage a gauze drop of dull, colorless gray.
A torch on each side of the stage gives a strange flickering light—yet the scene is quite dark.

At the top of the stair arrangement to the right
The German woman sits—with her head buried in her hands—
her long grey hair falls about her face—

She is the color of ashes with lines of sorrow on her face—
very thin and dressed in sombre draperies.
On the middle step to the far left—
The English Woman—
her hair is dark—streaked with gray—
her hands are folded on her lap—
and she looks into the far corner of the stage.
On the bottom step—in the middle
The Russian Woman
She is lying prostrate—with her head on the second step—
Her hair is very long and black—
She is dressed in white.

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

[she looks disdainfully at the German woman then at the Russian—]

You—my enemy —
and you—my sister in arms—

[she laughs in a cold hard way—]

I am superior—
My sons will know the light of Heaven—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

[with deep anguish in her voice]

I have given all my sons—
their blood be upon your head—

Your hands are stained with it—
[Her voice grows firmer]
They too will know the light of Heaven—

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

No—
not your sons—
only mine
The Angel of Death
When he walked in the trenches
and muddy fields—
took mine—
and those of my allies—into
Happiness—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

You fiend—
what lies you speak—
The Angel of Death took all souls—
into the blessed land
where race—
hatred—envy—
are unknown—

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

[rising]
You have lost all—
even the entrance to Heaven—

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

[lifts up her head—and with clasped hands]
Oh—my sisters—for such you are—
even tho' in arms we were apart—do not quarrel
God judges men—
as men do not—
Our Sons are all in happiness—
see—I am not in black for them—
They are joyous—why should I mourn. I alone am sorrowful.
Why should I wish them back into a world that has turned into Evil—
into a terrible flame which eats out the heart of all men
[her voice becomes agonized]
Russia—Russia—my heart bleeds for you—not for my sons who are with God—

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

[disdainfully—]
I would not listen to you—
you fell—
and tried to drag us all with you—

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

Speak not so—
my sons fought bravely—

suffered the pain of Hell—
in muddy trenches—
in blood covered fields—
They all faced death as heroes—
[Her voice breaks in a sob]
And now—
what is left me—
a devastated land—
my sons—
Gone—gone forever—
But they are happy—they see the light—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

Hear how she speaks—her heart is true—
She neither speaks against me—nor you—
[Her voice sinks—]
She is brave—and true—

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

[slowly descends from the pedestal—]
Vain words—
They have murder in their hearts—
[She goes out at the back of the stage]

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

Hear her—hear her—
It is she—

982732A

The conqueror—
The victorious—
who has murder in her heart—
She hates us both—

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

Yes—she has murder in her heart—
[The stage grows dimmer—
more dull grey curtains are lowered at the front of the stage—until the stage has passed away in darkness—
The Curtain falls]

SCENE II

Same as Scene I, only lighter—
The gauze drop at the front of the stage is a bluish silvery grey—
like the light of early morning.

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN sits on the first step—she holds a huge bunch of golden wheat in her arms—

THE GERMAN WOMAN still on the top step—her hands hang heavily at her side—

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

Of what use—
this wheat—
why should I bring up a new generation of sons—

feed them—
make them strong—and then—perhaps the world
will turn on me—
They will die—as their forefathers did—
in blood—
in horror—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

[listlessly]
Wheat—
wheat for my sons—
[The English Woman enters at the back—she is accompanied by the spirit of Friendship—who is dressed in white—covered with blood—
one arm is bandaged—with spots of blood on the white bandage—]

FRIENDSHIP—

I have wandered over the Earth—
I am repulsed from all lands—
[with a sob in her voice]
no one wants the Spirit of Friendship—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—
We want you here—

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

[coldly—]

I want you for myself—
not for these women—
who call themselves my sisters.

FRIENDSHIP—

But I cannot stay for one—
I am universal—
If I cannot be loved—and love all—my spirit breaks—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

Before you came—my English sister said that only her sons had entered Future Happiness—that mine—

[Her voice breaks off—]

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

[in great sadness—]

and mine—
where are they—
Spirit of Friendship—can you answer

FRIENDSHIP—

If you would all be in harmony—
I could call before you—a vision——

I could take you back across the years—
will you—
[she stands pleading before them—her hands are outstretched—]

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

To know the truth——
we would all be friends—
[The black curtain slowly disappears. At the back of the stage is an open field surrounded by trees—
It is a bright summer day—
Some thirty soldiers—
lying—desperately wounded in the field—
The sun sinks slowly behind the trees—]

AN ENGLISH SOLDIER—

[faintly—speaking with great pain—]
It won't be long now—
Relief from pain—
from horror—
[he drags himself along the ground]

A GERMAN SOLDIER—

[cries out—]
oh God—
I feel death—

protect my wife—my little one—
[There are German—Austrian—Russian—
English—Serbs—all lying in the Field—]

SECOND ENGLISH SOLDIER—

Life—
I loved it once—
it holds nothing now—

A SERB—[calls out—]

Greta—Greta—

AN AUSTRIAN—

To hold her—once more to my heart—
not in this life—
we will meet again—

A RUSSIAN SOLDIER—

[to the Austrian—]
Brother—for in Death thou art my brother—
There is happiness—
somewhere—
perhaps not far—
my Sonia went before me—
she will meet me—

[The sun sinks behind the trees—a pale—
white mist rises—giving a mystic appearance
to the field—
The ANGEL of DEATH—with outspread
wings—and clad in glistening white—
comes into the field—
one by one he touches the soldiers—]

THE ANGEL—

[to each in turn]
Arise
Arise
This is the day of Birth—
into life Eternal—

[The ones he has touched
rise up—
leaving their bodies on the ground—
The men who have arisen are dressed in
black—monk-like surplices—]

THE ANGEL—

[looking at a soldier—
and bending over him—]
See how he sleeps—
He must not know that I have passed—His time
is not yet come

[He touches another—
a Russian—]
Arise—
This is the light that has been promised you—
[A young girl appears in the trees—dressed as the Angel in the glistening white—
She stretches out her hands
The Russian goes to her
They disappear in the mist—]

THE ANGEL—

Come—all you Souls—that were as enemies on earth—
now—all children of the same Eternal God—all bound for the same home of happiness—

[Slowly the mist envelopes the field as the Angel and Souls disappear among the trees—
The black curtain is lowered—
The torches throw a strange violet light on the Women and on the Spirit of Friendship—]

THE ENGLISH WOMAN—

[falls on her knees
imploringly at the feet of the Spirit of Friendship—]

Mercy—have mercy—I have suffered so much—
that I have become hard—
[her voice is bitter]
I hated too much—
I had no mercy—
[she turns to the two women]
Forgive—
[she stretches out her hands—]
Forgive—
All our sons have gone to happiness and light—
Let us be friends upon this Earth—
That all hearts may rejoice—
[The two women come down and kiss her]

THE RUSSIAN WOMAN—

We too have been cruel and said hard things—

THE GERMAN WOMAN—

And thought hard thoughts—
Forgive—

THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP—

[Impressively]
For me it is as if the prison bars around my soul—
had crumbled and vanished—

Go now in Peace—
With love and forgiveness in your hearts—
[Strains of glorious music are heard
The stage is flooded by white light—
Slowly the curtain falls]

THE ETERNAL FATHER

The moon shone down, casting great strange shadows.
Vaguely—among the pillars, men were distinguished.
Back and forth—
bearing messages—
whispering—
Egypt was in danger—
That great civilized country of Africa—
Wars—and more wars were waged against its genius—
God in His Heaven looked down upon them—
Had they known Him—they would have called—lifted up their hand in supplication—
to help them—
the great nation of Egypt—
to destroy their enemies—
other children of God—
But they did not—
They called upon Iris and Osiris; and because the stone idols remained stone—they broke and destroyed—

and mocked the upturned faces in the temples.
God watched the wars—
He gathered unto Himself the souls—slain on the fields of battle—
drowned in the ocean —
and forgave all—
for He had not yet revealed Himself to the world through His Son.

Centuries have passed—
The ancient glory of Egypt is but a name—
A great army of men are on the sands of the desert—
"Behold—thirty centuries look down upon you" cries the leader of these weary men—
and Napoleon points out the pyramids—

Eighteen centuries have rolled away since the birth of Christ—
and as the Egyptians of old held out their hands to Iris and Osiris—to help them against the enemy—
so—soldiers—
among the French troops—
prayed to God—that they might conquer—
bring despair to other children like themselves—
of the great Universal Father.

I am right—and you are wrong—each country since time began—
has called as it entered war—
oh God—help me—my enemy represents everything

which is degraded—low.
Help me—I stand for justice—
We pray to the same God—
we love—
send up prayers and hymns—
and still—
"Thou shalt not kill"
is repeated only with the lips.
In times of war the heart cries out—
Kill—Kill
they are all unworthy—save me—
The Egyptian campaign is over—
The great English blockade is on
The French—led still by Napoleon plead to our Universal Father—
We must win.
All nations are united to crush France—and France only is worthy of Thy help!
Across the channel—
the English cry to the same God.
the Creator of all things
Help us to crush France—
It is dangerous among the brotherhood of nations—
O Lord be on our side—
on the side of justice.
A few generations pass—
France and England are clasped hand in hand to

fight the allies of England—during the Napoleonic wars—
As they march away together—
over fields that have been wet with centuries of blood.
fields known to Cæsar and his legions—
They cry—
Be on our side O Lord—
We are just and right—
If God had not all knowledge and knew not of the weakness of man—
how could He explain unto Himself the sudden changes—
the various combinations of countries
as they pass from side to side—
hating passionately—
first this country—
then this one—
then turning again—
and making each century more hideous with blood and disaster—
O Lord—be on our side—
The great just God of all —
of the ages past—and those to come—
watched again—
and gathered again wounded souls—
souls that came from quietude and love—
and died in the hell men had lighted upon Earth—
Millions upon millions of men—

massed in hatred against each other—
for the only purpose
to kill—
men of all stations and ranks
of all Religions—
Free Thinkers—
Atheists—
but all the children of the Eternal Father—
And He loved them all—
gave unto each one at death the consolation of Christ—
gathered the prayers of hatred and of love—
and—as ever—forgave—
and forgave again